

## **Riparian Habitat Program Language From ESSB5396**

**Sec. 1** RCW 79A.15.010 and 1990 1st ex.s. c 14 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions set forth in this section apply throughout this chapter.

.  
. .  
. .  
. .  
. .

(7) "Riparian habitat" means land adjacent to water bodies, as well as submerged land such as streambeds, which can provide functional habitat for salmonids and other fish and wildlife species. Riparian habitat includes, but is not limited to, shorelines and near-shore marine habitat, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers.

**NEW SECTION.** **Sec. 6** A new section is added to chapter 79A.15 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The riparian protection account is established in the state treasury. The committee must administer the account in accordance with chapter 79A.25 RCW and this chapter, and hold it separate and apart from all other money, funds, and accounts of the committee.

(2) Moneys appropriated for this chapter to the riparian protection account must be distributed for the acquisition or enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat. All enhancement or restoration projects, except those qualifying under subsection (10)(a) of this section, must include the acquisition of a real property interest in order to be eligible.

(3) State and local agencies and lead entities under chapter 77.85 RCW may apply for acquisition and enhancement or restoration funds for riparian habitat projects under subsection (1) of this section. Other state agencies not defined in RCW 79A.15.010, such as the department of transportation and the department of corrections, may enter into interagency agreements with state agencies to apply in partnership for funds under this section.

(4) The committee may adopt rules establishing acquisition policies and priorities for distributions from the riparian protection account.

(5) Except as provided in RCW 79A.15.030(7), moneys appropriated for this section may not be used by the committee to fund staff positions or other overhead expenses, or by a state, regional, or local agency to fund operation or maintenance of areas acquired under this chapter.

(6) Moneys appropriated for this section may be used by grant recipients for costs incidental to restoration and acquisition, including, but not limited to, surveying expenses, fencing, and signing.

(7) Moneys appropriated for this section may be used to fund mitigation banking projects involving the restoration, creation, enhancement, or preservation of riparian habitat, provided that the parties seeking to use the mitigation bank meet the matching requirements of subsection (8) of this section. The moneys from this section may not be

used to supplant an obligation of a state or local agency to provide mitigation. For the purposes of this section, a mitigation bank means a site or sites where riparian habitat is restored, created, enhanced, or in exceptional circumstances, preserved expressly for the purpose of providing compensatory mitigation in advance of authorized project impacts to similar resources.

(8) The committee may not approve a local project where the local agency share is less than the amount to be awarded from the riparian protection account. In-kind contributions, including contributions of a real property interest in land may be used to satisfy the local agency's share.

(9) State agencies receiving grants for acquisition of land under this section must pay an amount in lieu of real property taxes equal to the amount of tax that would be due if the land were taxable as open space land under chapter 84.34 RCW except taxes levied for any state purpose, plus an additional amount for control of noxious weeds equal to that which would be paid if such lands were privately owned. The county assessor and county legislative authority shall assist in determining the appropriate calculation of the amount of tax that would be due.

(10) In determining acquisition priorities with respect to the riparian protection account, the committee must consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) Whether the project continues the conservation reserve enhancement program. Applications that extend the duration of leases of riparian areas that are currently enrolled in the conservation reserve enhancement program shall be eligible. Such applications are eligible for a conservation lease extension of at least twenty-five years of duration;

(b) Whether the projects are identified or recommended in a watershed planning process under chapter 247, Laws of 1998, salmon recovery planning under chapter 77.85 RCW, or other local plans, such as habitat conservation plans, and these must be highly considered in the process;

(c) Whether there is community support for the project;

(d) Whether the proposal includes an ongoing stewardship program that includes control of noxious weeds, detrimental invasive species, and that identifies the source of the funds from which the stewardship program will be funded;

(e) Whether there is an immediate threat to the site;

(f) Whether the quality of the habitat is improved or, for projects including restoration or enhancement, the potential for restoring quality habitat including linkage of the site to other high quality habitat;

(g) Whether the project is consistent with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process;

(h) Whether the site has educational or scientific value; and

(i) Whether the site has passive recreational values for walking trails, wildlife viewing, or the observation of natural settings.

(11) Before November 1st of each even-numbered year, the committee will recommend to the governor a prioritized list of projects to be funded under this section. The governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the committee and

will submit this amended list in the capital budget request to the legislature. The list must include, but not be limited to, a description of each project and any particular match requirement.